



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 086 Queens

Q086

**87 - 41 Parsons Boulevard
Queens
NY 11432**

Principal: Karen Zuvic

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Lead Reviewer: Paul Cosway

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 086 Queens is an elementary school with 945 students from grade 3 through grade 6. The school population comprises 17% Black, 42.8% Hispanic, 2.7% White, and 37.2% Asian students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 5.7% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is an effective leader who is well respected by the school community and parents.
- The school has high aspirations for the academic success and personal development of all students.
- Relationships between teachers and students across the school are positive, ensuring that students grow in confidence and maturity.
- The curriculum is rich and varied, with a strong creative arts content that interests and stimulates students.
- Students enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average.
- The principal and assistant principals have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear vision for its future.
- Guidance and advice services are effective and support students and their families well.
- The school successfully meets the needs of students with the greatest barriers to learning and those whose first language is not English.
- Clear and consistent systems ensure the school is calm, orderly and runs smoothly.
- Good budget management and resource acquisition provides all that teachers and students need to succeed, especially in technology.

What the school needs to improve

- Set specific interim and annual goals for grades, teachers and students.
- Review these goals regularly, including by gender, and use the outcomes to revise instruction to make it more effective and hold teachers to account.
- Share goals and targets more precisely with teachers and students so they know exactly what they have to do to improve.
- Extend teacher's skills in differentiating instruction.
- Formalize opportunities for teachers to evaluate each other's classroom instruction and share good practice.
- Establish links with parents so that more of them become active partners in their children's education and help them to make progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal and all staff at Public School 86 work hard to create and maintain an attractive and purposeful climate for learning. The school succeeds because relationships between all adults and students are strong and positive. Students value the rewards they get for good work and positive behavior and these help their character development as well as making school a fun place to be. They respect their teachers, who they find kind and helpful. All this leads to them being motivated to do well, attentive in class, responsive and hard working. Attendance is above average and this too helps them to make progress. The curriculum is varied and designed to meet students' learning needs. Although there is no art teacher, the school has found ways of providing a good creative arts curriculum that the students very much appreciate. The focus on music and drama builds their confidence and fosters a love for learning.

The school cabinet makes effective use of data to monitor progress at individual, grade and whole school levels and school planning structures respond to these identified needs. However, there is a lack of specific targets for teachers, classes and groups of students. This makes it difficult to use interim reviews to monitor the effectiveness of instruction and programs of study. Nor can the school use interim reviews to revise instruction where necessary to increase the effectiveness of its planning.

The recently established inquiry team has made a good start in identifying the students for the focus group and has begun to use a range of information and data to plan the strategies to be used to support their learning. The school has a clear understanding of what it does well and what the next steps are to secure further improvement. This includes continuing the difficult task of encouraging more parents to become actively involved in their children's education, and developing formal ways to develop and share good practice through, for example, inter-visitations between classes.

Five areas of improvement were identified in the previous Quality Review report. The school has made good progress in using the school budget more effectively to fund identified needs in learning resources and now has an impressive number of computers. Students have better information about the next steps that they need to make to improve their work, especially their written work. Teachers have been taught how to use data in their planning. Supported well by coaches, guidance and intervention services, they are beginning to use data from assessment to differentiate instruction in order to meet the diverse needs of their students. This is better developed in math than in other subjects and there are still occasions when students are bored or struggling because work is too easy or too difficult. Overall, however, the school meets the needs of students with learning difficulties well. Classroom monitoring and the review of assessment data have led to a number of successful revisions to the curriculum to improve the teaching of literacy, and the provision for special education students and for those whose first language is not English.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school uses a wide range of data sources to track the progress of classes, grades, groups of students and each individual, with most concentration on students whose progress is causing concern. Teachers record comments on each student's strengths and weaknesses and use post-its on written work to praise achievement and set targets for the next piece of work. Teachers responsible for English language learners and special education students track their progress carefully. However, the school does not track how well other groups are progressing, by comparing boys' progress with girls', for example.

Comparison with the school's past performance is made annually. Similarly, individual student's progress and that of classes is tracked from year to year. The result of this, along with the changes that have happened following the monitoring and review of teaching, is that achievement is rising. The lowest third of students have made especially good progress, well above the average for the City as a whole. In math, the overall performance of students is above the City average, even though many are English language learners and many students are transient.

The school does not compare its performance rigorously with that of similar schools, partly because there are no directly comparable schools. It is the only school in New York City that educates students from grade 3 to grade 6. However, the principal is aware of school's nearby with a similar catchment and uses them to compare the progress of her own school as far as is possible. All aspects of professional development are well developed and those teachers willing to participate have a growing understanding of how to use data to inform their planning and measure the effectiveness of their lessons.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Teachers use effective systems in reading and math to assess students, ascertain their next steps and to align support service intervention to meet specific needs. Lesson aims and displays of work in classrooms demonstrate both expectations and achievement to the students. Where teachers share rubrics with their students, they are beginning to understand the precise steps that are required to secure improvement. This is helped in English language arts by the useful notes for improvement that teachers attach to all finished work. The drafting process, which is well-developed, and the mini conferences between students and teachers, further support the development of literacy skills. The older students are aware of the school's high expectations, though not always of their individual and specific targets.

School leaders collaborate well to analyze current trends and plan for the future. They have overall targets but do not yet share these widely, which hinders overall school improvement. Nor do school leaders set specific targets for grades, classes or sub groups, making monitoring and review more difficult.

Most teachers are aware of the need to work collaboratively to develop and share their teaching skills, but a small minority is reluctant to do so. The inquiry team is selecting students for a special focus and analyzing their past performance carefully to work out how to help them to improve. The team is in the process of setting teachers challenging targets. There has been good concentration over the past year on groups and individual students most in need of support and the quality of this intervention has already resulted in significant gains by many. For example, there are now five separate classes dedicated to English language learners, where students stay until they are ready to join general education classes.

Students and parents and caregivers are given regular information about goals, progress and next learning steps. The parents who visit the school praise the way it informs and involves them with workshops and regular parent teacher meetings. However, too many parents are reluctant to come to the school. This restricts the useful exchange of information between home and school that would help both sides to understand factors that are causing certain students not to achieve as well as they can.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Teachers use some strategies that give on-going data to help them to measure the progress that their students are making. However, they do not make sufficient use of pre-tests, end-of-unit tests to assess and meet the individual needs of students. The lack of specific goals for teachers means that they are not held fully accountable for their students’ progress.

The curriculum is rich in learning experiences and there are cross-curricular links that help subjects to reinforce each other. In a science class, for example, the teacher showed a good awareness of the need to develop literacy skills with helpful work on the meaning of specialized vocabulary. After watching a video on machines, students responded by writing interesting essays on levers and pulleys. The curriculum is varied, and enriched with a satisfactory range of creative activities, much enjoyed by the students, including drama, clay modeling and opportunities to learn an instrument.

There are regular grade meetings and opportunities for collaborative planning. Most classrooms are good learning environments, because good displays of students’ work and helpful signs and charts help students to succeed. There are not enough posted rubrics to make teachers’ expectations totally clear to students.

Some teachers are differentiating their instruction to meet most students’ needs, but too often common tasks are set that are not challenging the high achievers or supporting lower achievers sufficiently. Most teachers work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and students and parents are respected also. This supports students’ academic and personal development, as does the emphasis the school places on regular attendance.

Data is used well to inform strategic decisions for school improvement. The school has robust, effective procedures to ensure good attendance.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

There is a full program of classroom visits, and the formal visits are followed by detailed feedback to praise what teachers do well and give constructive help to improve instruction further. The school is beginning to set out clear expectations of what a good lesson should contain and what makes a classroom a good learning environment. The school plans to utilize these expectations as the basis for assessing teaching on shorter, informal monitoring visits.

Professional development is well planned to support the school's goals but some teachers are reluctant to take part in order to improve their practice. Teachers are able to share ideas and to watch each other's lessons but this is often through informal arrangements. New teachers praise the support that they get and the induction procedures to support and train them are very effective.

Many students and families face difficult circumstances or personal problems and the school does much to help them through effective guidance counseling. The school runs smoothly and discipline is good, because students are very clear about what they can and cannot do. There are very productive partnerships with outside organizations, such as Queen's Community House and Jamaica House, that help to raise students' achievement levels. The school makes good use of a wide range of student support services to support students' personal development.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school's plans for improving student and teacher outcomes do not include objectively measurable, time-scaled interim goals to measure success. As a result it is more difficult for the school to make adjustments to their plans based on the evaluations of interim reviews. There are firm plans to introduce these and the school cabinet plans to use the new ARIS data system to set and measure targets for teachers, classes and grades. There are good examples of mid-year reviews leading to revisions, however. These were not triggered as a result of interim targets, but arose from the on-going monitoring of student performance and of lessons by the principal and assistant principals. This monitoring showed that more support was needed for students with English as an additional language and resulted in new classes being formed to meet their needs. Similarly, routine monitoring raised questions about the appropriateness of the literacy course being followed and significant changes resulted. In both these examples, initial evidence suggests that they have been successful innovations.

Teachers use data from periodic assessments to measure the achievement of their students, but are not carefully measuring the progress that they make. Some are aware of the need to revise instruction promptly in the light of the assessment outcomes, but others put the onus on students to improve rather than themselves. The principal, who is well respected in the community, has a clear vision for the future development of the school and has already implemented procedures that have raised achievement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 086 Queens (PS 86)	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?		X			
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?		X			
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?			X		
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?		X			
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X			
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?			X		
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?			X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?		X			
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X			
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?		X			
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?		X			
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?		X			
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X			